

Resource Pack
Spring 2010

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Part One Introduction

This resource pack aims to support classroom and further study of the events and characters of 1936 by Tom MacNab directed by Jenny Lee. The Resource Pack for 1936 is aimed to support curriculum outcomes at GCSE, Diploma, and A/AS level, in Drama, Theatre Studies, Expressive Arts, English, History and Citizenship.

Cast List and Creatives

David Baron	Diem Latour
Kate Cook	Leni Riefenstahl Coach Goldstein Schimdt
Jonathan Battersby	Lewald Judge Mahoney Coach Snyder
Tim Frances	Adolph Hitler General Sherrill
Peter Harding	Brundage March Edwin Bergmann
Rolan Bell	Jesse Owens
Jim Creighton	Shirer
Chris Myles	Goebbels Rabbi Wise
Josephine Taylor	Christine Muller Greta Bergmann
Creative Team	
Jenny Lee	Director
Mel Hillyard	Assistant Director
Kevin Jenkins	Designer
Howard Hudson	Lighting

1936 Synopsis

The play covers the period between April 1931, (when Berlin was awarded the 1936 Olympic Games) and December 1935, when the American Athletics Union voted on an American boycott of the Berlin Olympics.

The action is seen through the eyes of **William Shirer**, an American journalist working in Berlin.

Carl Diem and **Theodore Lewald**, the Olympic organisers, receive the news of Berlin's successful Olympic bid. **Hitler** is at first doubtful of the value of the Berlin Games, but is convinced by **Goebbels** of their worth as a propaganda tool, and authorises the construction of a 100,000 capacity stadium.

In 1933, **Hitler** swiftly begins to remove Jews from all positions in public life, and from all German sports clubs. This has immediate implications for the few Jews who are of international calibre, one of whom is the high jumper **Gretel Bergmann**. Her father contacts Shirer in order to keep his daughter in the news and in the frame for Olympic selection. She is despatched to safety in England by her parents, where she is welcomed, and where she immediately establishes herself as one of Europe's leading high jumpers. Both **Diem** and **Lewald**, are discovered to have Jewish links, are removed from their professorships, but are retained as advisors to the Berlin Games.



In the meantime, **Count Henri Baillet Latour**, the chairman of the International Olympic Committee, has contacted the head of the American Olympic Committee, the millionaire businessman **Avery Brundage**, on the Jewish situation in Germany. The alarm bells are now ringing, and Brundage's immediate reaction is that the United States will boycott Berlin unless there are radical changes in German policy.

In a meeting with Latour, Brundage is offered evidence that the growing Olympic boycott movement is a Jewish conspiracy. He is advised that he may well be offered a position on the IOC, with the prospect of eventually taking over as Chairman.

The German film-maker **Leni Riefenstahl** is offered the opportunity to make a film of the 1934 Nuremberg Rally, with a possibility of eventually filming the 1936 Olympics. She uses the Rally film to portray Hitler as a demi-god.

The anti-nazi movement is now gaining momentum in the United States, with thousands of Jews fleeing Germany to seek asylum there, and the USA becomes the centre of the Olympic boycott movement. Its leader, **Judge Jeremiah Mahoney**, has taken over from Brundage as head of the Amateur Athletic Union, a corporate body of the sports associations in the USA. Shirer meets with Mahoney, who outlines his position on an Olympic boycott. **Charles Sherrill**, a retired diplomat and US General, will be despatched to Germany to conduct a thorough investigation of the Jewish situation.

Meanwhile, Hitler and Goebbels are preparing for General Sherrill's arrival. Goebbels has done his homework. He finds that Sherrill, like most military men, loves order and discipline, and that is what he and his beloved leader will give the General when he arrives in Germany in the summer of 1935.

Shirer visits Ohio State University to visit the great black athlete **Jesse Owens**, who has, in June 1935, broken or equalled six world records in forty five minutes. He finds that Owens knows little of the Jewish situation, and that as a black athlete; he does not even have sports scholarship. Owens is later visited by Judge Mahoney, in a vain attempt to have him mobilise Negro athletes to boycott Berlin, only to find that Brundage has already reached Owens and turned him against any boycott.

The Olympic boycott movement gathers pace in the USA, and Mahoney, Rabbi Stephen Wise and other opponents of the Nazi regime speak out through the airwaves to the American public.

General Sherrill, royally –treated in Germany returns to the USA, with a glowing account of Hitler and German sport, and reports back to the Press. Shirer presents Sherrill with a vicious anti-semitic quotation from an official German sports publication, and the press-conference breaks up in a riot.

The AAU vote is coming up, and the Nazis are worried. It is now only two months away from the opening of the Winter Olympics, and the German ice hockey team are refusing to play unless their best player, the Jew Rudi Ball, is included. Faced with a public relations catastrophe, Hitler caves in. Rudi Ball will play.

Avery Brundage is equally worried. He speaks with Latour, offering a fall-back position should the December 16th AAU vote be lost. In that event, the American Olympic Committee will send their own team. Latour agrees, but asks Brundage to tell no one else.

In the event, the decision to attend the Berlin Games is won by a mere two and a half votes. The United States will go to Berlin. As a result, Ernest Jahnke, the American pro-boycott IOC member, becomes the first to be removed from its executive committee. Gretel Bergmann, now one of the world's leading high jumpers, is withdrawn from the German squad as soon as the

American team is on its way to Berlin. The Berlin Olympics goes on to be the most successful Games of its time. Three years later, Hitler attacks Poland and the world is plunged into war.

The characters

WILLIAM SHIRER (1904-1993)

Shirer was one of the first western journalists to understand the nature of the Nazi regime, and with it the significance of the 1936 Berlin Olympics. Although he was not a sports journalist, he tracked the progress of the Berlin Olympics and the persecution of the Jews throughout the period prior to the Games and beyond. Up till America's entry to the War in November 1941, he delivered for CBS radio a series of immensely influential talks to the American public.

His Berlin Diaries have become one of the main means by which we have been able to enter the minds of the Nazi regime.

The Berlin Olympic Organisers

THEODORE LEWALD

Lewald, with his friend and colleague Carl Diem, was responsible for bringing the 1936 Olympic Games to Berlin. Until 1920, Lewald had been in mainstream politics, and had played a part in creating the Weimar constitution. After that, he devoted his life to sport, and in 1929 toured the United States with Diem, and developed a friendship with Avery Brundage. By 1933, he was President of the German Olympic Committee, but on the discovery of his Jewish ancestry, he was replaced by a Nazi, Hans von Schamner und Osten.

CARL DIEM (1882-1962)

Diem is best described, in his early years, as a sports development officer. He was central to the preparations for the 1916 Berlin Olympics, for which Germany (expecting a speedy resolution to the War) continued to prepare until they were cancelled by the IOC. Diem was responsible for what was probably the first institute dedicated to sports science, and as a result of lobbying with his colleague Theodore Lewald, he secured for Germany the 1936 Olympic Games. He was intimately involved in the preparations for the Berlin Olympics, and created the first torch relay, an event whose impact resonated throughout Europe. Sad to relate, Diem was to be found, in the dying days of the Second World War, in the Olympic stadium, exhorting a regiment of Hitler Youth to fight to the end. Two thousand of his audience did exactly that.

The Nazis

ADOLF HITLER (1889-1945)

Hitler's skills as an orator and political activist became obvious in the dark years immediately following the Great War, when he assumed the leadership of the Nazi party only a year after joining its ranks. Despite standing trial for high treason in 1923 Hitler went on to promote anti-semitism, anti-communism and nationalism in *Mein Kampf* and then throughout the country until

he was appointed Chancellor in 1933, and almost immediately established a dictatorship. His persecution of German Jews started in the first months of his government, resulting in the infamous Nuremberg laws of December 1935, which relieved the German Jews of most of their rights as citizens.

His attack on Poland in September 1939 brought him into conflict with France and Great Britain. Had he not unwisely invaded USSR in June 1941 and declared war on the United States after Pearl Harbour, he might well have successfully attacked the British mainland, and gone on to dominate Western Europe.

Hitler committed suicide with his mistress Eva Braun in his Berlin bunker in June 1945, responsible for the deaths of 17 million civilians, including 6 million Jews.

JOSEPH GOEBBELS (1897-1945)

Goebbels achieved a PhD from Heidelberg University, and spent the next ten years writing unpublished novels, plays and poetry. On Hitler's appointment as Chancellor in 1933, he became his Minister of Propaganda, and convinced him of the value of the Berlin Olympics as a propaganda vehicle for the Third Reich. Goebbels was also an able politician, and he steadily increased his power and influence throughout the War. By late 1943, the tide of war was turning against the Nazis, but Goebbels spurred the German nation to fight to the end. Sequestered in Hitler's bunker in the final days of the War, he allowed his wife Magda to kill their six young children, before they both committed suicide.

The International Olympic Committee

COUNT BAILLET de LATOUR (1876 – 1943)

Baillet de Latour, a Belgian nobleman, was Chairman of the IOC from 1925 until his death in 1943. Although he made no attempt to bring before the IOC the possibility of removing the Olympics from Berlin, he was vigorous in pressing Hitler to remove anti-Jewish literature and road-signs during the Olympic period. On his death, his coffin was paraded through Brussels draped in a swastika.

The Americans

AVERY BRUNDAGE (1887-1975)

Brundage competed for the United States in decathlon and pentathlon in the 1912 Stockholm Olympics, and was a fine all-round athlete. Having lost a fortune in the 1929 stock market crash, he established himself in the Chicago building industry, and became a millionaire.

By 1933, Brundage stood at the pinnacle of American sport, leading both the American Olympic Association and the Amateur Athletic Union. Subsequent to the 1936 Olympics, he became a member of the IOC and by the end of World War 2 led the Olympic movement. He was in 1936 brought on to the International Olympic Committee, and in 1952 became Chairman of the IOC, continuing in that role until 1975.

A staunch supporter of the amateur ethic, he dominated the IOC until his death in 1975.

JEREMIAH MAHONEY 1879-1970

Judge Jeremiah Mahoney , a Catholic Irish American , featured only briefly on the American sports scene, in the period immediately prior to the 1936 Berlin Olympics, as chairman of the American Athletic Union, where he led the 1936 Olympic boycott movement.

The Filmmaker of Olympiad

LENI RIEFENSTAHL (1902-2005)

Riefenstahl was at first a dancer in the Isadora Duncan mould, then featured as an actress in the late twenties and early 1930s, in a series of German “mountain” films. Her 1934 Nuremberg Rally film “Triumph of the Will” was immediately recognised as a masterpiece of Nazi propaganda. It led to her “Olympiad, Festival of Nations” film of the 1936 Olympics, which still appears in most lists of the best documentaries of all time.

Cleared of any connection with war-crimes, she at first unsuccessfully attempted to revive her career as a director of feature films. Riefenstahl then became an outstanding stills photographer, and at the age of 92 took up scuba diving and underwater photography.

In the post-war period, Riefenstahl struggled without much success to distance herself from the Nazi regime, and died at the age of 102.

The Athletes

GRETEL BERGMANN (1914-)

A German-Jewish high jumper, Gretel Bergmann was denied Olympic participation by her association, and moved to the United States in 1937. There, she married a fellow- German Bruno Lambert, a doctor whom she had enabled to leave Germany. In that same year, she took American titles in shot and high jump, and did so again before retiring from athletics in 1939.

In 1996, she was inducted into the National Jewish Sports Hall of Fame and at the 1996 Atlanta Olympics was an honoured guest of the German Olympic Committee. In 2004, Home Box Office released a documentary film “Hitler’s Pawn”, in which her story was told.

JESSE OWENS (1913-1980)

Owens was the iconic figure of the Berlin Olympics. In 1933, while still at High School, he had equalled the world record in 100 yards(9.4secs), and in May 1935 he had broken or equalled six world records in the space of 45 minutes.

Banned from amateur athletics after the Games as a result of his refusal to travel with the American team to Scandinavia, he found it difficult to capitalise on his Olympic success on his return from Berlin. Owens raced against horses, baseball players and boxers , but failed to make a good living.

In 1952, President Eisenhower began to deploy Owens as a “goodwill ambassador”, but even then his financial problems persisted and in 1966 he was successfully pursued for tax-evasion. Two years later, Avery Brundage deployed Owens to attempt to head off the “Black Power” group at the 1968 Olympics, with no success. He died of lung cancer at Tucson, Arizona, in 1980.

Part Two: Historical background

Germany in the 1930s

Germany had lost over two million men in the Great War. The victorious Allies, ignoring the advice of the American President Woodrow Wilson, had imposed crippling reparations on the German nation under the Treaty of Versailles. These conditions, combined with the great Depression, (1929) had sapped the morale and will of the German people.

There was conflict in the newly established government of Germany under the presidency of Hindenberg. Two parties in particular took their conflict out in the street; The National Social Democratic Party (Nazis) and Communist Party.

The nation therefore sought scapegoats, and this provided a rich opportunity for demagogues such as Adolf Hitler and his Nazi party, who blamed the Jews for all of Germany's ills, and who proclaimed the superiority of the Aryan race. They encouraged Germany to take nationalist pride and encouraged the ideals of the Volk.

Hitler in Mein Kampf

“The Aryan is not greatest in his mental qualities as such, but in the extent of his willingness to put his abilities in the service of the community. In him the instinct of self preservation has reached the noblest form, since he willingly subordinates his own ego to the life of the community and, if the hour demands, even sacrifices it.”

When Hitler became Chancellor in January 1933, a number of events allowed the Nazis to take further undisputed control. The Reichstag (Government Buildings) were set on fire, Hitler instigated The Protection of People and State, which meant the government suspended the freedom to assembly and expression, authorised wire tapping on phones, opening of mail, sanctioned searches without search warrant and indefinite detention without trial. The Nazi party therefore were able to dominate German politics with no opposition. The death of Hindenberg in 1933 allowed Hitler to be recognised as The Fuhrer and had the army swear allegiance to him and him alone. The Nazis also built on their establishment of a nationalistic pride with large scale pageants and rallies. They focused on the younger generations creating the Nazi Youth, They created jobs for the mass unemployed in the creation of the autobahns giving the impression of restoring and re-establishing the economy. They created labour camps and started to 'clean up' the undesirables; such as gypsies, communists and Jews.

The persecution of Germany's half million Jews started almost immediately on Hitler's accession to power in early 1933, with a boycott of Jewish shops in April 1933. This was followed by the removal of Jews from public positions, and by late 1933 their removal from German sports clubs. The racial cleansing of the nation had begun, and developed momentum in the period prior to the 1936 Olympics.

Chronology of Events

Oct 1929	1.6 million unemployed
July 1931	Berlin is Awarded the 1936 Olympics over Spain
Feb 1932	6.12 million unemployed
Jan 1933	Hitler becomes Chancellor
Feb 1933	The Reichstag burns
28 Feb 1933	Decree of the president for the Protection of the People and State Banned – freedom to assembly Authorised wiretaps Opening of mail Sanctioned searches Indefinite detention without warrant
April 1 1933	Boycott of Jewish businesses
Nov 21 1933	Vote by Amateur Athletic Union for an American boycott of Berlin Games
June 0 1934	The Night of the Long Knives Hitler and his SS imprison and murder members of their party including Rohm who was in charge of SA and one of the founding members of the Nazis party.
Aug 1 1934	President Hindenburg dies
March 1935	The release of “The Triumph of Will”
6 Dec 1935	The results of the Boycott Vote
1 Aug 1936	The start of the Berlin Olympic Games

The Olympics

Fundamental Principles of Olympism

- 1. Olympism is a philosophy of life, exalting and combining in a balanced whole the qualities of body, will and mind. Blending sport with culture and education, Olympism seeks to create a way of life based on the joy of effort, the educational value of good example and respect for universal fundamental ethical principles.*
- 2. The goal of Olympism is to place sport at the service of the harmonious development of man, with a view to promoting a peaceful society concerned with the preservation of human dignity.*
- 3. The Olympic Movement is the concerted, organised, universal and permanent action, carried out under the supreme authority of the IOC, of all individuals and entities who are inspired by the values of Olympism. It covers the five continents. It reaches its peak with the bringing together of the world’s athletes at the great sports festival, the Olympic Games. Its symbol is five interlaced rings.*
- 4. The practice of sport is a human right. Every individual must have the possibility of practising sport, without discrimination of any kind and in the Olympic spirit, which requires mutual understanding with a spirit of friendship, solidarity and fair play. The organisation, administration and management of sport must be controlled by independent sports organisations.*
- 5. Any form of discrimination with regard to a country or a person on grounds of race, religion, politics, gender or otherwise is incompatible with belonging to the Olympic Movement.*
- 6. Belonging to the Olympic Movement requires compliance with the Olympic Charter and recognition by the IOC.*

ⁱFrom the Olympic Charter July 2007

The modern Olympic Movement was the creation of a French aristocrat, Baron Pierre de Coubertin. He had been impressed by the English Public School system, with its strong emphasis

on sport as an educational vehicle. De Coubertin attributed much of the success of the British in establishing an Empire which spanned the globe to this sporting culture.

De Coubertin at first attempted to influence change in the French education system, using the English public school sports model. Rebuffed, he moved to the international stage. De Coubertin added the ancient Greek Olympics to his vision, and 1896 saw the first Olympic Games of the modern era in Athens.

The idealistic De Coubertin saw the Olympics as a festival which would bring the nations of the world together. He established the International Olympic Committee on the same basis as England's Jockey Club, with membership by invitation only.

His first Olympics staged in Athens in 1896 though successful, attracted only 245 competitors, all of them men and most of them Greek. There were no national teams, and the standard was low.

By the time of the 1900 Paris Olympics, control of the Games had been wrested from de Coubertin, and though the standard was much higher than in Athens, the event lasted over three months, and the organisation was chaotic.

St. Louis 1904 was little better, with, as in Paris, the Olympics being an adjunct to a World Fair. The event ended up as little more than an American inter-club competition, and de Coubertin did not attend.

The success of the 1908 Rome Olympics was therefore crucial to the Olympic movement, which was at this point far from being firmly rooted in a growing international sports culture. Alas, in 1906 Vesuvius erupted, and the cost of the rebuilding of Naples meant that Rome had to withdraw from the Games. London accepted the challenge, and in 1908 held an immensely successful Olympics, marred only by intense bickering between Great Britain and the USA. 1908 represented the first occasion on which nations entered as teams.

Stockholm 1912 was an equally successful Olympics, but the Berlin Olympics of 1916 was cancelled because of the Great War.

The Olympic movement continued to grow in the 1920s, and it is worth noting that Germany and the other defeated nations were not allowed re-entry until 1928, in Amsterdam. In that year, women (who had competed in other sports since 1900) were finally allowed to compete in a limited track and field programme.

Nazi Germany did not bid for the 1936 Olympics. That legacy was handed on to the Nazi regime by the Weimar government in 1931, a year before the 1932 Los Angeles Olympics. Hitler was not initially enthusiastic about the Games, but was bought over by his Propaganda Minister, Josef

Goebbels, who saw them as a means both of selling Nazi Germany to the world and enhancing national morale.

However during the run up to the Berlin Games the IOC and America in particular were raising questions about Germany's treatment of the Jews. The first issue was the expulsion of the Jewish descendant and Games organiser Theowald Lewald who was a member of the IOC. However Berlin responded by reinstating Lewald into an advisory role. Then there were questions of how Jewish athletes were being treated in Germany, in particular the German fencer Helen Mayer who was living in LA. There were issues of how international Jewish athletes would be treated. In response Germany was able to assuage key figures doubts with Lewald assurance that German Jewish though banned from training were not banned for trying out for the Olympic squads. However having been banned from training many Jewish athletes were not to Olympic standards. They were also to gain the support of key international figures such as Coubertain, Brundage and General Sherrill were invited to Germany to see how the Games were being planned. The role and the policy of the Olympics came into question. How far could the Olympics interfere with a guest nation's politics? And what was the responsibility of the Olympics internationally to allow the promotion of a country with questionable ethics.

The 1936 Berlin Olympics

The 1936 Berlin Olympics were highly successful and memorable due to the Olympic achievements of Jesse Owens, the film Olympia and how organised and impressed the international community were with the running and coverage of the games. Hitler himself in the opening address advocated the ideals of the ancient Olympics and set forth his plan to further excavate the original site in Germany's support of the Olympic ideals. 49 Nations competed though Spain and the USSR did not attend the games. Germany won the most gold medals, which bolstered the image of German athleticism and national pride. Jesse Owens won four gold medals; he also beat the established world records. He was a symbol for the triumph of a Black athlete beating Hitler's Aryan master race. The Games were carried out smoothly, Hitler and the Nazi removed all the blatant anti-Semitic posters and propaganda in the areas affected by the Games. The scale and the organisation of the Games showed Germany in a positive light. The ceremonies and the inclusion of the Olympic torch relay from Greece still continues into the modern Olympics. The athletes were extremely well taken care of which impressed all the visiting nations. The subsequent report of the Games created by the Berlin Committee with contributions from Hitler, Goebbels, Lewald, Diem and Latour made the emphasis that the Games would help to create peace among nations. Ironical considering what was to happen two years later.

We observed with pleasure that during the weeks of the Games a genuine "Divine Peace" prevailed, and that the interest and best wishes of millions throughout the world were concentrated on this event, which contributed substantially towards furthering peace among the nations and developing a nobler and purer type of humanity. C. Diem and T. Lewaldⁱⁱⁱ

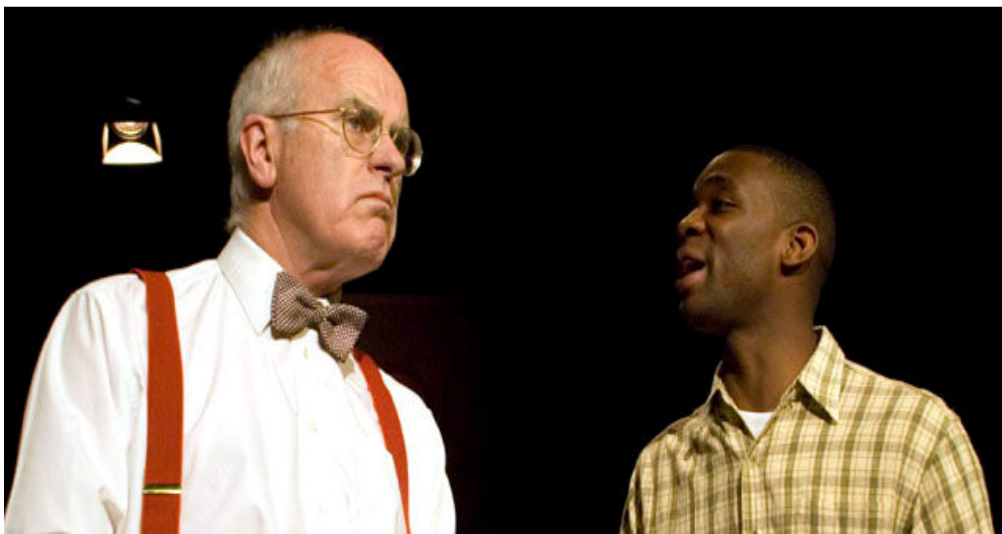
Part Three Themes and Issues

The Olympic Games and Controversy

The Berlin Olympic Games were not the first or the last games to raise controversy or speculation on the host nation or current social and political issues. In 1968, at the Mexico City Olympics, two black athletes Tommie Smith and John Carlos made a political statement by saluting Black Power from the Victory podium. They were after expelled by the IOC. In 1972 the Munich Games were marked with tragedy when the Palestinian Group Black September murdered 11 Israeli athletes. In 1976 28 nations boycotted the Montreal Games over issues of Apartheid. In 1980 the USA led 62 countries to boycott the Moscow Olympics at the height of the cold war. In 1984 the USSR retaliated and boycotted the Olympics held in the USA. More recently in 2008, there were a number of protests about the Beijing Olympics. A number of people raised issues about China's treatment of Tibet and their involvement with Darfur.

Action Point

- (1) *Why do you think the Olympic Games attract so much controversy?*
- (2) *In 1936 there were a number of arguments about the Olympics being above politics. Do you agree or disagree? Can you find examples from the run up to the Games to justify your opinion?*
- (3) *The AAU (Americian Atheletic Union) wase going to stage a boycott of the 1936 games. If the boycott had gone through, what do you think would have happened? Can you find examples or quotes to support your opinion?*
- (4) *The 2012 Olympic Games are going to be in London. Can you think of any possible controversies that might be raised before the 2012 Games?*



Propaganda and the Media

Shirer's Berlin Diary

Berlin August 16

I'm afraid that the Nazis have succeeded with their propaganda. First they have run the games on a lavish scale never before experienced, and this has appealed to the athletes. Second, they have put up a very good front for the general visitors, especially the big businessmen^{iv}

The Olympic Games were important in creating an international and national image of Germany. Politically there were questions about not only Germany's treatment of Jews within its border but also about its quiet manoeuvring around the Treaty of Versailles which had crippled Germany financially. The treaty limited their military capabilities, limiting the size and conscription of the army and the amount of armaments they could have, Germany's confidence and its standing in Europe was severely weakened. Hitler managed to negotiate around these stipulations by making new treaties and alliances with nations like Great Britain, France and Russia. The Nazi party with emphasis on national pride used propaganda to a large extent to change the perception of Germany both nationally and internationally.

The Nuremberg Rallies and all of Hitler's appearances were carefully staged and recorded. The rallies used music, the press, and pageantry to encourage German people to rejoice in the Third Reich and Germany's national ideals. The timing was all important at these rallies; Hitler always arrived late to build the anticipation in the crowds. The crowds would be carefully arranged so that Hitler was always greeted by women and children.

The Olympic Games promoted Berlin and it is argued in retrospect that the Games allowed Germany to get around the League of Nations. The organisation of the Games again were very carefully managed to promote the strength of German athletes. There was a focus on relating the Berlin Games to the ancient world, which can be seen in Riefenstahl's film and in the creation of the events such as the torch relay from Athens.

Olympiad

The creation of Olympiad by Leni Riefenstahl the director of the Triumph of the Will allowed the games to be immortalised. It was first screened on Hitler's 45th Birthday in 1938. It won the gold medal award at the Venice Film Festival in 1938.

The success of the film was due to Riefenstahl's organisation and treatment of the material. She came up with a film treatment that connected the modern Olympics to the ancient Olympics, extolling the beauty and the efforts of each athlete. To achieve her vision, she and her highly organised and trained team of over 80 cameramen had to come up with new techniques never

before tried. These innovations were aimed at capturing the event from a number of angles, following the athletes moment by moment without hindering or distracting the athletes from their competition. The camera team dug pits by the high jump to get shots from low angles, they put cameras on hidden rails that would race along with the runners and put camera on floats in the swimming pools during the training so they could capture the expressions on the athletes faces.

At the end of 16 days Riefenstahl had over 400, 000 metres of film which were edited by her alone over the space of two years. This arduous task exhibited Riefenstahl's talent for editing which she had learnt for Eisenstein and Arnold Frank. She created a documentary film of sports that highlighted the drama in every sequence.

Upon the film release, there was trouble internationally. The event of the Kristellnacht when Jewish Synagogues and businesses were burnt and vandalised had shocked the world. The reception and then boycott of German products resulted in a negative response to a film that showed the Third Reich in a positive light.

Action Point

1. **Watch the beginning of Olympia**
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kNL8tUwyRDo&feature=related>
2. **What are the images being shown? What is the music being played?**
3. **What story do you think the film is trying to tell?**
4. **Watch the first five minutes of The Triumph of the Will.**
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GcFuHGHywE&feature=related>
5. **What do you think this story is trying to tell?**
6. **Can you see any similarities or differences in the filming; like the editing, the use of music, what images Riefenstahl's films use?**
7. **Do you think the films inform (give factual information to the viewer) or emote(create an emotional reaction in the viewer)**



Part Four: *The Production*

Playwrights Notes

My first viewing in 1953 of Riefenstahl's 1936 Olympic film had an immense impact upon me. All Olympic films up till 1936 had been little more than extended newsreels. "Olympiad, Festival of Nations" was something quite different, an offering at the altar of human excellence, a paean to the beauty of the body in athletic action. My perception of sport was never ever again quite the same.

In 1960, I was working in Bermuda, as a PE teacher, and attempted to buy a copy of her Olympiad from Riefenstahl . It cost £250, about a quarter of my salary, so I resorted to the Bermudan government to purchase the film, which they did. When it eventually arrived, I promptly appropriated it, and showed it ad nauseam to my bewildered pupils. Riefenstahl, realising my passion for "Olympiad", was kind enough to write me several long letters, which have, alas, vanished.

Although Olympiad secured many awards in the period prior to the War, Riefenstahl, her reputation blighted by her earlier film "Triumph of the Will", was unable to show it publicly in the USA when she visited in 1938, although she showed it privately to several Hollywood luminaries such as Walt Disney, who expressed great admiration for the film.

After the War, Riefenstahl found it impossible to return to film, and pursued a career as a stills photographer. She found it difficult to distance herself from the Nazi regime, and died aged 102 in 2005.

I have always had a passion for sports history, and have, over the years, read many accounts of the Berlin Games. "1936" represents an attempt to synthesise those studies and place them in dramatic form. Although, for obvious reasons, I have no idea of who said what to whom, I have tried to stick to the contents of letters or reports in the discussions, and to provide dialogue consistent with what we know of the characters.

Squaring the Circle in Docu-drama

Central to docu-drama is finding a balance between the demands of entertainment and the truth. Here I would define "truth" as the best informed judgement of the writer. What the writer must at all times avoid is coming to a subject with strong preconceptions, and that is not always easy.

In my case, I knew about the persecution of Jewish athletes and the failure of the IOC and sports' governing bodies to respond to it. That was about it. What I did not know was the time-scale (1933-36), Hitler's uncertainty about the Olympics, the nature of Nazi discrimination against

Jewish sportsmen, or the duplicity of IOC officials and their anti- Semitism. Then there was Riefenstahl's non-racial attitude to the Games and her battles with Goebbels, the nature of American sports politics, a whole raft of issues. In short, I didn't know very much, and that was probably to my advantage, for I entered the task without the handicap of prejudice.

It is worth, at this point, going back to the issue of truth and entertainment. No good purpose is served by wallowing in a debate about the nature of truth, a subject which has for centuries taxed the minds of philosophers. Suffice to repeat that the writer must try to enter the subject of his play free of preconceptions, and that he must try to come down on the right side. That means, in terms of "1936", the side of justice and human rights, and that is what I have tried to do.

I first encountered this truth/ entertainment issue in my work on the Oscar-winning film "Chariots of Fire", a film based on two 1924 Olympic athletes Harold Abrahams and Eric Liddell.

Central to the Liddell character was his refusal to run in the 100m. on a Sunday. In the film, we have him refusing to compete directly prior to the Games, and being offered a race in the 400metres. All of this is totally without substance. Liddell had found out about the Sunday 100m. final a year before, and had entered the 200m. and 400m. events. That would, alas, have made bad drama, and was rightly ignored.

In direct contrast, we have Oliver Stone's film, "JFK", which deals with conspiracy claims subsequent to the assassination of President John F. Kennedy in 1963. When I took my 16 year old daughter to the film, she assumed that the film was "true". In fact, a central character,(a "Deep Throat" informant claiming a murder- conspiracy), was complete fiction. Alas, without this character, the plot of "JFK" would simply have fallen apart.

The problem with this cavalier approach to truth is that for a majority of people, "JFK" represents the only information that they possess about the assassination- claims made by the American lawyer Jim Garrison. That observation could equally well apply to "Chariots", but here there are two important differences. The first is that (unlike "JFK") "Chariots" deals with what is, in historical terms, a relatively unimportant event . The second is that the essence of the main characters has been maintained, and that any fictitious characters do not affect the central truth of the film.

Here it is worth considering the works of Shakespeare in which he portrays historical characters, like "Macbeth", "Julius Caesar" and "Henry iv". These cannot be truly called docu-dramas, as they make no attempt to trace the paths of history in any detail. In any case, in some plays ("Macbeth" is a good example) the historical detail hardly exists. Similarly, though the assassination of Caesar is a historical fact, the thoughts of Brutus and the plotters are not. Shakespeare is therefore able to take any interpretation of their motives that he pleases. In all cases, he simply uses the main characters as the basis for drama, unconcerned with documentary accuracy.

Similarly, the portrayal of Macbeth and Richard Third as treacherous, homicidal kings is of no concern to him; they are merely vehicles for the exploration of the human condition.

The balance between entertainment and truth is a fragile one. Because if the audience is not being entertained, then it matters little how truthful, how accurate, the writer is being. The audience is past caring. The writer has lost them, and all his precious facts are of no great matter to anyone. Here, a good recent example is Clint Eastwood's "Flags of Our Fathers" and "Letters From Iwo Jima", films about the bitter battle for the island of Iwo Jima in World War Two. Both are honourable and truthful accounts of what happened, but both films failed badly at the box-office.

An author always has to travel this tightrope between truth and fantasy, for pretty much every syllable of dialogue has to be made up. How on earth, for instance, do I know what Hitler said to Goebbels when they first discussed the Olympic Games? The answer is that I don't, but I do know that Goebbels adored Hitler, and that his Fuhrer was initially uncertain about the value of the Games to Germany. And I do know that Goebbels was devious and sexually promiscuous, so I gave him a fictitious mistress who provided him with some of the ammunition that he could deploy with his beloved Fuhrer. In contrast, the statements made to the Press by General Sherrill subsequent to his 1935 fact-finding mission to Germany to study the Jewish situation are correct to the very syllable. They are less than accurate only in that they have been heavily edited in the interests of brevity



There have been other necessary adjustments to literal truth. The meeting between Avery Brundage and Count Henri Latour was, in fact between Brundage and another Olympic official, Latour's colleague, the Swede Edstrom. This change was made for reasons of economy, (to cut down on cast-numbers), but does not falsify Edstrom's position, or that of the IOC. And the views of Jesse Owens are at best speculation, and probably give Owens a more aggressive attitude and a more articulate view than he might have expressed at that time.

Here it is worth observing that even documentary film, like literary works of history, is always selective. It therefore often represents either the screenwriter's preconceptions, or simply the nature of the film available to him. At its very best, it represents, not simply available visuals, but research beyond that, which takes the final product far beyond procurable film. The writer of

docu-drama operates under no such limitations, for he simply makes it all up, using the facts to fire his imagination and frame his thoughts. He can often therefore offer an insight far beyond the capacity of the best of documentary, even if he cannot always provide the same level of accuracy.

For me, my play represents probably fifty years of research,(much of it unconscious), since in 1954 I first witnessed Riefenstahl's film of the 1936 Olympic Games, and made contact with her in the early 1960s. This, plus an extensive study of the myriad histories of the 1936 Games, of Riefenstahl biographies and histories of the 1930-1940 period has resulted in my play "1936".

Director Notes

Developing a radio script into a full production - the rehearsal process

In a radio play words are of utmost importance, visual action is difficult to portray. It is well-suited to large cast plays. Actors can play multiple parts by altering the timbre and dialect of their vocal delivery to the extent that they would not be perceived to be the same actor. Continents can be crossed with ease, new locations established in an instant by a change of ambient sound. Short scenes present no problem. Depth of character is second to the telling of the story, as it moves so swiftly.

With a stage play the audience has different expectations. They like to identify with the characters, and follow their storyline. To try to portray a large number of characters can make that identification difficult, and is confusing if they require double and triple casting. They enjoy action and visual treats, and can find a series of seated duologues tedious. Locations need to be clearly visually defined and physically separated, as the eye takes precedence over the ear in a stage production. The audience are looking for catharsis – to be moved by characters and situations. Depth of character and subtext is important to a theatre audience, and an overall visual and aural concept of the production that satisfies the senses. This means lighting is very important as well as sound.

1936 was originally written as a radio play, with 21 Characters and 29 scenes. Locations – Germany- USA – France – Great Britain. There was the narrator, William Shirer, to introduce the events 1931 – 1936. He was the 'older' Shirer, but the period from which he was looking back was never defined.

The first thing we did in looking at the script was to find a context for Shirer looking back. He was now a physical presence. We need to decide on his age and why he was writing this story – as the play is narrated through his eyes.

But where was it taking place? The designer needed a background to conceive the set; expressionistic or tied in to a generic location. We settled on the 1936 Olympic stadium in Berlin

in 1948, at the time of the lifting of the Russian blockade by the US – giving Shirer a reason to be there, and a reason for his looking back on the events that led up to the 1936 games. So he is looking back at himself some 14 years earlier. He is now 48. He has a point of view and the audience can identify with him.

We then streamlined the script, removing some scenes that didn't carry the story forward, and in so doing eliminating four characters. We had 17 main characters and 26 scenes, length 1hr 25 mins.

The next decision was priorities and budget-spend. As nine actors were doubling different roles, detailed costume for each character was of utmost importance. We decided to spend most of the budget achieving detail and accuracy of the period in the costumes and the realism of the props, and in creating the ambience of the stadium with international flags of the period. By contrast the stage furniture had to fulfil many different functions and locations, it needed to be basic and easily moved by the actors. The four stage dimensions varied greatly, so we needed to have a flexible stage plan. The lighting design defined the different stage areas and locations. The rest was left to the imagination of the audience.

I worked on the individual scenes in depth, then staged them, being aware that visual variety was very important. Most scenes were mainly between two or three actors. We had outdoor stadium scenes which could take the whole stage, intimate conversations which were close, and studio and large office scenes which gave a feeling of space. We discussed the ambience of each location and the actors visualised where they were, creating the feeling of that space, which then communicated to the audience.

The sound design was also helpful in establishing location – as it had been in the radio version.

It was essential that scenes flowed effortlessly into each other with the minimum of moving of chairs, tables or props. We worked hard in rehearsals to ensure this flow. Hitler moving his own chair seemed unacceptable to start with, but gradually we found the style that would work throughout the play – and it became absolutely acceptable!

The emotional content of the play and the catharsis was of utmost importance – and the shape of the piece – like a good piece of music it needs to have a beginning, a development of the theme, an expansion into crescendo, and a conclusion, and this is what we worked towards.

Ultimately all the ingredients worked together to produce the whole – story, actors, set, lighting and sound, and I think we achieved a successful transition from radio to stage. Certainly the audiences enjoyed it, and would not have suspected it was originally a radio play.

Jenny Lee, Director 1936

April 2010.

Interview with Actor Kate Cook

playing Leni Riefenstahl, Coach Goldstein and Schmidt

Q. You're playing Leni Reifenstahl, the woman who directed and edited Olympia. How have you researched the role? What were the most important things to find out?

A. *I have researched the role of Leni Reifenstahl by reading, 'A Portrait of Leni Reifenstahl' by Audrey Salkeld, 'Leni – The Life and work of Leni Reifenstahl' by Steven Bach and by watching a documentary called 'Leni Reifenstahl' directed by Ray Muller and by watching clips on Youtube of the propaganda films she made for Hitler. I also happen to have recently read about Marlene Deitrich which has been useful because she was born at the same time as Leni Reifenstahl and worked in the film industry in Berlin at the same time as Leni Reifenstahl. By comparing the two of them it has help me to get a more rounded picture of Leni Reifenstahl, her motives and her attitude towards Nazism. For example when Marlene Deitrich's husband read Hitler's 'Mein Kampf' he knew it was time to leave Germany. Whereas when Leni Reifenstahl read 'Mein Kampf' she wrote notes in the margins of the book, went to one of Hitler's Nuremberg Rallies and set out to meet Hitler. I like researching, it's fun.*



I think it's important to find out as much about the character as you can. Everything from how they spoke how they moved to what they ate and what clothes they liked to wear. With a real character like Leni Reifenstahl you not only have the script from which you can find clues on their personality but also books or the internet or

TV. You need to know what kind of a person it is you are going to portray – what motivates them, what their goals are, what kind of energy they have. Sometimes it's helpful to think of other characters you may be more familiar with who have similar characteristics. Some people like to think of an animal that their character might be like or what colour they would represent or what kind of material.

Q. What are the challenges in your opinion of portraying a historical figure in a drama like '1936'?

A. *When playing a historical character you have a responsibility to be true to the person you are portraying. There is a certain lack of freedom compared to the parts where every decision is based on your own instinct – you are bound by fairly rigid truths. Normally a part is an unknown quantity and you can invent as you like but with a historical figure you can only go so far. For example if you were playing Elizabeth I you wouldn't want to give her a French accent, a hunch back, one eye and a peg leg because we know that was not how she was! There's also the pressure of everyone's preconceptions especially if your character is much loved/admired.*

Q. What are you enjoying/finding interesting about portraying an historical figure?

A. I'm finding the whole subject of WWII fascinating! I have learnt so much since starting research on this play. It's so easy for us now with the benefit of hindsight to look back and assume that everyone involved with Hitler was simply evil but it's much more complex than that. It's really interesting to look back and study the people involved as real humans and try to understand their motives behind what they did. I think many people involved with Hitler were swept away by a desire for power and had no idea what the consequences would be. Leni Reifenstahl was an amazing woman. She was a woman in a man's world who was very determined to get what she wanted. I believe she was motivated by power and money and the desire to achieve these through her art. She was extremely focussed and ambitious and latched onto anyone she felt would help her reach her goals. In one of the books I read they quoted her as saying: 'I must meet that man' whenever she met someone who inspired her, who might further her career. She would then make it her mission to seek them out. This is what she did with Hitler. She saw in him a powerful man with whom I think she identified. As I mentioned before, she saw him at a rally, was totally spellbound and immediately wrote to him. Consequently she got to meet him and worked for him making his propaganda films thereby achieving the fame she desired. Though sadly, of course, it all backfired. After the war, as a result of her involvement with Hitler her film career was ruined. But she still lived to be 103 and was very active well into her 90's. A very strong lady.

One of the interesting things about researching Leni Reifenstahl is that in order to save her reputation after the war she reinvented history and told stories that couldn't possibly have been true. So it's quite fun trying to work out fact from fiction in order to properly work out what kind of a person she was. It's like being a detective.

Q. You're also playing two other characters. What are the issues of playing a number of characters within the same play?

When playing more than one character it's important to make the characters as distinctive from one another as possible without being ridiculous. You need to find a slightly different tempo for each one, perhaps a slightly different way of moving, slightly different voice, different way of holding yourself. But again you don't want to go too over the top in a desperate attempt to appear different from how you were in the last scene.

Q. What is the process of rehearsal like?

A. The first day of rehearsal is usually quite nerve racking but exciting because you are meeting all these people you have never met before who are going to a big part of your life for the next

few weeks or months. You usually read through the play to begin with then get up on your feet and start to play and continue to do so for the next few weeks. You arrive at rehearsal having done all that research and having made certain decisions about your character then you have to try and consolidate them through the rehearsal process. You must also be prepared to discard all the decisions you've made and to start all over again! You discover a great deal about your character through working with the other actors and playing off them – by seeing how the other characters in the play react to yours. It's all great fun then it starts to get nerve racking again as the first night approaches. Then you make a whole load of new discoveries about how best to play the role when feeling the reaction of the audiences. So it's a never ending learning process really.

Q. How do you think this play speaks to us in 2010?

A. I think '1936' is very relevant today. There are many parallels to what is happening in Britain today and what was happening to Germany then. The most obvious parallel is of course the Olympics which we are going to host in 2012. But we are also going through a massive recession now just as they were in Germany in the 1930's and the cost of the Olympics is of great concern to everyone. We are also suffering mass unemployment as they were in Germany and racism now is rife as people look to blame others in a recession. The BNP is now more popular than it has ever been. We're told about the importance of equal opportunities but many people still express racist and homophobic views. We are also, like Germany, trying to make this a great Olympics, aware that we will be the centre of the world's attention and there is a great deal of political spin surrounding this and many other areas of politics. It is great to have a play like '1936' to remind us of what the consequences of our current situation could lead to.

The Design

Interview with Kevin Jenkins, about the design process

Q. How do you start creating a stage design for 1936? Do you have a process for putting the stage design and costume design together?

A. I always start by looking at the script. Understanding the characters and their settings is crucial to developing a design that enables the story to be told clearly. I talk with the director so that together we can decide how the piece is going to be played and the style of performance we are aiming for. I then go and look at the script in more detail and will typically storyboard the production to get an idea of how many characters are on stage, where they need to appear from, how the locations can be symbolized and how the audience can understand who the different characters are



Q. What are the challenges and opportunities of designing a play set in such a specific period of history?

A. The main challenge of a historical piece is making sure the costumes, furniture, props etc are historically accurate to enable the audience's imagination to take them back in time. 1936 is particularly challenging because of the different characters played by each actor and the need to give them costume elements for each character they play that they can change quickly, sometimes without the time to change their entire costume.

Q. The production is touring to a number of venues. How does that effect the overall design of the set and costumes?

A. The set has to be really flexible because the venues are very different sizes. The design has some crucial elements that will be used at all venues and then other items that are used at larger venues. This ensures the stage doesn't look too crowded or too empty.

Q. What are you enjoying about designing 1936?

A. I find the events of the story really interesting. I have recently designed other productions in this period and it has been fascinating to find out more and research the topic. Designing for a production that features Nazi's requires a careful use of their symbols such as swastikas. Trying to get the balance right of using them effectively without turning the audience off is an interesting challenge.

Q. How did you get into stage design?

A. I first designed for student productions when I was a student at Durham University. After a few years of being a secondary school teacher I realized the thing I enjoyed most was school productions. I attended a scenic art summer school at RADA to help develop skills for the sets I designed for school but this made me want to design for theatre full time. I attended the Motley Theatre Design Course and have since been working as a freelance theatre designer.



Part Five: Further Study

Classroom Exercises

These Exercises can be done individually or as a group.

Looking at the script

Sc 8

SHIRER

By November 1933, like many others, I became aware that Jews were being removed from every area of German public life. In the home of Theodore Lewald, he is again with his colleague, Carl Diem. But this time the conversation between the two men is of quite a different nature.....

LEWALD

When did your letter arrive, Carl ?

DIEM

The same day as yours, yesterday.

LEWALD

But Carl... but I can't get my head round any of this. I am not Jewish.

DIEM

Neither am I, Theodore. Just Liselott.

LEWALD

Your wife - Oh. I didn't know. (pause) Me, it was my grandmother.

DIEM

That seems to be quite enough nowadays .They call me the White Jew.

LEWALD

It's all madness. Madness. They can't clear out the whole of Germany. Our doctors, our teachers, our judges? Half a million Jews?

DIEM

That is what it seems they are trying to do, Theodore. Someone from the Party told me yesterday that they were planning to send our Jews to Madagascar.

LEWALD

Madagascar? (*pause*) Should we have seen this coming? The Jews are being banned from every sports club!

Our colleagues at the International Olympic Committee, Carl, they won't stand for it, and as for us losing our professorships!

DIEM

I wouldn't be too sure.

LEWALD

But they are cutting straight at the heart of Olympism, Carl, at everything we believe in, everything the Olympic Movement stands for.

The Americans certainly won't tolerate it - they have lots of Jewish athletes.

DIEM

We'll see, Theodore we'll see. Joseph Goebbels is no fool. He may have taken away our professorships but he's kept us on our Olympic committees.

LEWALD

Because they need us.

DIEM

But they don't WANT us. *(pause)* What we must do now is to protect our families.

LEWALD

Yes. Yes. Our families.

DIEM

Say things we do not mean to people we do not like.

LEWALD

Worse still, say things we don't mean to people we DO like.

v

1. Read this scene again.
2. Imagine you are either Diem or Lewald. What has just happened before this scene? What do think Diem and Lewald fear will happen in the future? Can you find examples within the play to justify your observations?
3. If you were Diem or Lewald would you make the same choice? If yes, why? And if not why? Can you use information from the background of the play and characters to back up your decision?
4. How far do you think personal concerns such as fear and ambition motivated individuals to allow the Nazi party to succeed in its goals? Can you find examples within 1936? Can you find references to international behaviour during the period of 1933 to 1938?

Improvising

1. Pick a character from the play.
2. On a piece of paper think and write down what you think the character wants? What they want to achieve? What obstacles are in the way of them achieving their goals?
3. Now in small groups. Take it in turns to hot seat each other by asking each character questions about the play and their choices.

For example if you were hot seating Jesse Owens, questions could be

Do you want to go to the Olympics? Why do you want to go the Olympics? What do you think it will be like when you get there? What will you do if you don't get to go to the games etc.?

4. When everyone has had a turn in the hot seat as the character. Discuss what motivated the characters. If you were in the same situation would you make the same choices?

Glossary of terms in the play

Reichsminister	is an official of the Reich.
The Fuhrer	A German word for leader
Bismarck	is a reference to the German leader who unified the states of Germany and became Germany's first chancellor in 1867.
Baron de Coubertin	Baron Pierre de Coubertain is the father of the modern Olympic movement
The Reich	translates into the realm – the third reich translates to the third realm or reign.
Speer	Albert Speer was an intellectual architect who was befriended by Hitler and held a significant position of power.
The Olympic Bell	was a new symbol that Germany introduced in 1936 to the Olympic Flame and the Five Gold Rings. It was inscribed with the 1936 Olympic motto "I call the youth of the world"
Zionistic	Zionism is a term that promotes Jewish people reclaiming their homeland and preserving the Jewish religion.
Anti Semitic	refers to any behaviour that is hostile or negative towards the Jewish religion and people
Berghof	Hitler home in Obersalzberg in the Bavarian Alps

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ⁱ *Hitler, Adolf in Mein Kampf* p92 reference in Michael Burleigh's, *The Third Reich A new History*, London; Macmillan Publisher Ltd, 2000

ⁱⁱ From the Olympic Charter July 2007
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ⁱⁱⁱ p13 Ed. Dr Friedrich Richter, *The XITH Olympic Games Berlin 1936 Official Report Volumes 1 and 2*; Berlin, Wilhelm Limpert – Verlag, 1936.

^{iv} P59 William L Shirer, *Berlin Diary: The Journal of a Foreign Correspondent*, London; Hamilton and Hamilton, 1941

^v Extract from Tom MacNab's play **1936**,